

7 Business Lessons I Learned From Planning My Daughter's Wedding

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My 26-year-old daughter recently got married. I've been to dozens of weddings and have enjoyed them, but this was the first time I was involved in putting a wedding together. In the months of planning for this week with my wife, I learned seven valuable lessons that can relate to business.

We thought about having a traditional wedding, so we searched for a wedding venue to hold the reception. However, we ran into a problem. Our guest list included about 500 of our closest friends – most of them were my daughter's network of fans, friends, students and others.

Paying \$50-\$150 per plate for a reception venue was out of our budget for that many people. We had a choice: We could whittle down the list or put the wedding together ourselves. We did both.

We got the guest list down to 300 people, and to still save as much money as we could, we did the wedding ourselves. My wife was the wedding coordinator, and I was her assistant.

What does a DIY wedding look like? Well, we bought custom stickers and placed 400 stickers of the bride and groom on 400 water bottles. We borrowed vases from friends and had many of our own from previous events. One of our friends is a design hobbyist, so she made dozens of table settings and bouquets from real flowers and fake flowers. I could go on.

However, what was MOST important about planning this wedding were the lessons I learned in doing it:

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1. Communication is essential

We had several WhatsApp groups to facilitate communication. We had regular meetings for status updates and planning various elements of the wedding. My wife and I were in constant communication. We went to the venue, our church, many times to prepare and plan.

Poor communication is one of the biggest barriers to success. Miscommunication and misunderstanding will sink your business.

Maybe my wife asked me to “put vases on the table,” but I didn’t ask which vases. This can result in the wrong vases being on the wrong tables.

Your business is the same. Communicate clearly – in fact, when the task is highly important, you should over-communicate.

2. Be clear on the goals you’re trying to accomplish

As we went through the weeks leading up to the wedding, we kept in mind the key goals we needed to accomplish. We knew the bride and groom had to get married – that was most important. Other goals we had were good food and a fun environment, among other things.

Your business is the same.

Be clear on what goals you want to accomplish in your business, including the various projects and tasks that are a part of your business. If you’re not clear on your goals, it’s going to be very hard to know what success looks like and how

to even be successful.

3. Get help

While my wife shouldered the bulk of responsibilities for the planning of the wedding with my support, we could not have done the wedding by ourselves. We had friends and family helping us at various stages of the wedding.

One couple helped us for weeks leading up to the wedding. Other friends also offered assistance on the day of and in the weeks before the wedding.

Running your business is the same. It's very difficult to serve your customers and grow your business if it's just you. Seek help by building a team, and seek help from friends, mentors and even your family. You'll need help in different ways from different people.

Help could take the form of paying a lawyer to help you draft a legal agreement the right way. Help could take the form of a good business friend giving you advice on a new hire.

Don't be afraid to get help in starting and growing your business.

4. Who you partner with is important to your success (or failure)

My wife and I were partners in ensuring a successful wedding. We trust each other and do our best to work together. It's the same in business.

In order for a partnership to be successful, you must understand what's important to your partner. Understand how they communicate and their styles of working.

A partner can be a POWERFUL asset to your business as they can help offload the thinking and actual work that needs to be done in order to grow a business. However, the wrong partner can be detrimental to your business.

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5. Prioritization is essential – Don't major on the minors, and don't minor on the majors

Prioritization is important, especially as the complexity of your projects increases. There's only so much you can get done in a given day. Time is finite. Hence, being able to prioritize is essential. In preparing for the wedding, we had to constantly prioritize. For example, today, we're going to set up tables. Tomorrow, we'll set up vases. As we got closer to the wedding, we had to "let go" of some things and scale back on other things.

You'll need to do this in your business as well.

What needs to be done TODAY? What can wait until later? What MUST be done this quarter, and what can be held off to another day?

As you work with others, also understand that YOUR priority might not be their priority. Hence, having shared goals and an understanding of what's important to you, your partner and/or your team is important.

6. Who are the stakeholders?

For the wedding, we knew there were several important people or groups of people we had to consider. The bride and groom were the most important. The groom's parents were also important, so we had to consider their needs and concerns. We

also had to think about our church ministry and their concerns and needs for the wedding.

Your business is the same. You're NEVER solo in your business. There's you, your employees (or team members), your customers, possibly government agencies, vendors and others.

Consider the stakeholders who are important to the success of your business, and think about their needs and concerns.

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7. Get advice from others

Critical to the wedding's success was our wedding coordination team. This team was made up of my sister, my daughter's best friend, my wife, my daughter, my daughter's fiancé and me!

We had regular meetings with this team to get their input and their help with much of the planning for the wedding – cake, clothes, housing and so much more.

You also need advisors in your business. You can get advice from peers who are fellow business owners. You can get advice from books and podcasts. You can join a mentorship community. You can also hire a consultant to guide you with certain aspects of your business.

My daughter's wedding was a success, and now you know why. A wedding is a one-day event. However, your business can take years to grow and be successful. You can't build a successful business alone – it takes guidance, purposeful planning and a bit of luck.

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